No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-212-5-20-8

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE JULY 25, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE

ROOM 450
THE OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING

11:35 A.M. EDT

MR. NESSEN: This is all on the record, for immediate release and quotation. Maybe the best way to go at this would be to have 20 minutes or so of questions on the trip, which begins tomorrow, and 15 minutes or so, if there are other matters that interest you.

The Secretary has a crowded schedule today, and we would like to try to hold this to somewhere between 30 and 35 minutes.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Barry, I understand you have the first question.

Q I was going to ask a Middle East question. There is a statement here that the White House has put out on the trip. In it, the President says the Helsinki declaration will further the aspirations of the people of Eastern Europe, and he restates our commitment to the peaceful changes.

In a specific way, can you tell us how somehow this will further the aspirations of the people now locked into the Soviet sphere?

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: First of all, one has to analyze what the phrase "locked into the Soviet sphere" means.

Q Lithuania, Latvia and part of the Soviet Union.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: In those countries, the existing situation in Europe reflects, among other things, a balance of forces and a state of affairs that has continued for a generation. It was not created by a document and it will not, as such, be changed by a document.

Therefore, the question that has had to be answered in the entire post-war period and has been answered in different ways at different times is, what is more helpful for a humane evolution, a policy of confrontation or a policy of easing tensions, whether peoples can realize their aspirations better under conditions in which there is political and a threat of military conflict, or under conditions in which the two sides are attempting to settle their disputes and ease tensions.

The judgment that has been made -- and it is important to remember that it is not only that of the United States, but of all West European countries -- is that a policy in which an attempt is made to settle political conflictswill help the humane values that they espouse.

This was the basis for Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik in 1969, in which he faced within his country the question of whether the objectives that he sought were best achieved by a policy of political confrontation or by a policy of easing tensions.

He gave the answer, he made the decisions as far as the Federal Republic and the German question was concerned, which in turn was at the heart of the European problem.

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The agreement by the United States to attend the European Security Conference was in fact made conditional on progress on the German question, and particularly on the solution of the Berlin issue.

So, therefore, it is, I believe, that the easing of tensions in the world and easing of tensions in Europe will help ease the lives of people and may contribute to an evolution in which the problems that produced the Cold War can be dealt with more effectively.

No document is going to change the existing balance of power on the Continent, and therefore there are limits to what any agreement can achieve, but this is the sense in which the President used that paragraph.

Q Mr. Secretary, what do you foresee as being the consequences of yesterday's House vote on the Turkish aid embargo?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would like to answer that in the second part of the press conference.

Q Question please.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The question was the consequences of the House vote on the Turkish aid embargo, and I would prefer to answer this -- if we could keep the first 20 minutes on the trip and the implications of the trip, and the second 20 minutes on general foreign policy questions --

Q Mr. Secretary, the President will be meeting with Secretary Brezhnev twice. Can you describe what will be discussed in those talks and how far apart and how difficult to narrow is the gap on the SALT negotiations?

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: Of course, every time the President and the General Secretary meet, there is a general review of the world situation. But, I would think that the three subjects that will receive most attention will be primarily SALT, then the further evolution of European negotiations, such as MBFR and finally undoubtedly there will be a discussion about the Middle East.

With respect to the SALT negotiations, Foreign Minister Gromyko gave us some replies to the American position on SALT while we met in Geneva. On several important categories, these represented distinct progress.

In other categories, there is still a gap. The issues on which a gap remains are substantially fewer in number than was the case a few weeks ago. So, what the President and the General Secretary will attempt to do is to see whether the issues on which progress has been made, how to turn them over to Geneva, and on the issues on which progress still remains to be made, whether they can narrow the differences.

It is our view that a SALT agreement is possible and that the issues on which the compromises have to be made are now quite clearly defined, and therefore it depends on political decisions in both countries.

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Q Mr. Kissinger, since the United States is going to go into the CSCE summit with absolutely no economic policy whatsoever except massive austerity and triage, which is backed up by the kind of international terrorisms that you are now personally implicated in, in the cold arms deal and various other things, New Solidarity would like to know what you are going to tell us will be the American response to the Soviet alternative to all of this, which is increasing trade arrangements with the Third World and Western Europe based on a transfer of rubles which would undercut the existing dollar debt structure --

Q Question?

Q What was the question, Dr. Kissinger? (Laughter)

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The question was almost as complicated as my answers tend to be and probably a little more comprehensible. But if I understand the question it was, has the United States an economic policy -- I am leaving out the various personal allusions --

Q What would your response be to the Soviet policy which has now been made clear?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think we have to make clear that at the European Security Conference the Soviet Union is not likely to put forward an integrated economic policy to which we have to respond, because the European Security Conference really is primarily concerned with ratifying the agreements that have been reached in stage two and to permit each of the leaders to make a policy statement.

However, at the side there will be many bilateral discussions. The United States -- leaving aside the various comments about Soviet economic policy -- the United States requires a foreign economic policy for an extremely rapidly changing world and one which it is quite possible the Soviet Union may attempt to enter over the next five to ten years, but I do not believe that that issue will come up at Helsinki.

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Q Mr. Secretary, why do you think the Russians seem so interested in having such a conference? What do they get out of it?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would like to express that our policy has to be made in terms of our purposes. We should not gear our policy to preventing something that the Soviets may have a motive for doing. We have to assess whether it also serves our own purposes.

Now the European Security Conference has been a part of Soviet policy since 1953 and 1954. At that time, it had a totally different purpose. At that time, it was designed to keep the Federal Republic from entering NATO.

It has been rejected at periodic intervals by the Soviet Union. It was rejected for a long time by all the European nations as well as the United States.

In the 1960s an increasing number of West European nations moved towards acceptance of the idea of a European Security Conference. And then, in the late 1960s, with the beginning of the change in German policy, it gained a momentum in which the United States decided that it was wiser to participate in that process rather than to attempt to block it.

However, the conditions have changed importantly since this process was initiated and I would say that for the Soviet Union it was started at one time to prevent the Federal Republic from entering NATO.

In the 1960s it may have been conceived as a kind of substitute peace treaty, but then as the 1960s developed many of the issues which originally could have been discussed at the European Security Conference were settled in a series of bilateral agreements which the Soviet Union made with every West European country and the United States, so now the focus of the European Security Conference has drifted more to a general statement of principles rather than the character it had then.

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Nevertheless, the Soviet Union has continued to attach greater importance to it, perhaps in part because, like other governments, when something has been such a cardinal aim, once it is achieved, even if some of the original assumptions have been somewhat altered, it still retains its importance as an achievement as a long held goal.

But as far as the United States is concerned, we see the significance of the Security Conference as a useful step in a general pattern of the improvement of relations between the East and West. We do not consider it an additional ratification of any existing arrangement. We consider these principles of conduct that repeat what has already been stated in many bilateral arrangements and adds to it certain principles of peaceful change and improved human contact, which we consider useful progress but which we will confine to the words "useful progress."

Q Mr. Secretary, the United States initially came to the position of participating in the conference in the belief that also some parallel progress should be made in MBFR. Can you tell us now what progress is being made in MBFR?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, that is not a correct description of what the United States' position has been. The United States linked the opening of the European Security Conference to the opening of the MBFR discussion. During the course of it, it was never the position of the United States, and certainly never the position of our West European allies, that progress in both of these negotiations should be linked, and indeed on the one or two occasions that we explored the possibility of this link with our West European allies, they rejected the concept that the forced reduction negotiations should be conducted in step with the European Security Conference.

So the fact that they are not linked together is primarily due to discussions within the West and it has never been a condition that the United States made.

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The question is, where do we stand on the force reduction negotiations? The United States attaches importance to the force reduction negotiations. Without question, the President will raise this in his discussion with the General Secretary.

These negotiations are now in recess. They have followed the procedures and the general atmosphere that occurs in the general course of these negotiations, which is that they go through a long discussion of technical phases in which the positions of the two sides are not frequently compatible.

They are now at a point where some decisions have to be made on both sides. Some decisions have to be made on both sides modifying the positions that exist.

The positions that have been taken up to now, while they have been irreconciliable, have nevertheless enabled both sides to study the technical implications of a number of reduction proposals that have been put forth. We are now at a phase where this requires a decision -- which has happened also in the SALT negotiations -- to move things into a stage of more detailed negotiations.

Q Mr. Secretary, one criticism of this conference is that its purposes are so modest that it does not seem to warrant engaging the presence of the President of the United States and 34 other heads of government, to sign these papers. How do you respond to that?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The position that the United States took throughout the conference was that we would attend at the highest level if this was the judgment of the other participants and if sufficient progress were made to justify it.

That sufficient progress was defined during the conference as progress in the so-called Basket 3 on human rights and progress on the military provisions of the advance notification of maneuvers, and finally on the clause with respect to peaceful change in Basket 1 on the statement of principles. These objectives were substantially attained.

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Nevertheless, the United States did not agree to the summit level until all the major West European countries had previously agreed to it, and it was our view that nuances that might separate one in one's assessment of this, did not warrant breaking allied unity on the subject.

Secondly, the conference will give a very useful opportunity, of course, for the meeting with General Secretary Brezhnev and also with other leaders for the President to exchange views and to make progress on outstanding issues.

So on the whole we consider the content of the conference useful and the visit will also make a significant contribution in a number of areas.

Q Mr. Secretary, on the meeting with Brezhnev, you had talked about SALT a little bit but can you be more specific? Has there been progress on the verification issue, and has the Soviet Union accepted American proposals on the counting of MIRV's or have they come up with a viable substitute?

And two, are you seeking Soviet forbearance for an interim agreement for American presence, as technicians in the Middle East? What do you want to talk about on the Middle East?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: With respect to SALT, I have no question that within the next few weeks it will seep out of various elements in the Government, uncharacteristically, but in summer our standards relax a little.

But I have promised Foreign Minister Gromyko that until the negotiations were somewhat further advanced, not to go into a detailed description of the proposal.

I can only repeat what I have said before, that in some areas some significant progress has been made. In other areas, considerable differences remain. And, of course, the United States has attached importance to the verification issue, but I don't want to go into where the differences remain and where the progress has been made.

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With respect to the Middle East, to say the United States asked for Soviet forbearance is to imply a state of affairs that may not correspond to facts. We naturally, as co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, periodically review the Middle East situation with the Soviet Union. We have also always had the view that no final settlement could be made in the Middle East that excluded Soviet participation.

So what we have to discuss with the Soviet Union is where down the road and in what manner the approaches to a final settlement will be made.

With respect to negotiations now in progress, it is not correct to say we are seeking Soviet forbearance so, of course, the restraint of all of the parties as well as outside countries in that process, is of utility.

MR. NESSEN: Let's open it up now for more general questions, for 15 minutes.

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Q I would like to ask this question to bridge the two subjects. Mr. Secretary, the Administration is encountering extraordinary criticism here of the President's trip to Helsinki. Simultaneously, the Administration suffered a major setback in Congress yesterday on the Turkish vote and also in committee on the Jordanian Hawk missiles.

Can it be the Administration is seriously misjudging the Congress and the public in terms of what their views are of what the traffic will bear on the foreign policy?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: One of the benefits of detente is that you can criticize detente, and if we did not have it, we would be criticized for missing opportunities for peace.

Is it true, is the Administration misjudging what the temper of the country is? We believe that in the basic direction of East-West relations, the Administration is in no way misjudging the temper of the country.

In any event, the Administration has an obligation to put before the country and to put before the Congress its best judgment of what is required for peace or progress towards peace in certain areas, even if it should get defeated on the issues.

First, on the East-West relations, we do not believe we are misjudging the temper of the country, and we ought to keep in perspective the nature of the criticism, the depth of the criticism and we should be aware of the fact that what makes the criticism possible at all is that we are not living under conditions of crisis.

So, there is a temptation to have all the benefits of peace, as well as all the benefits of looking tough.

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With respect to the Turkish aid vote, I believe this is a result of a special Congressional situation that existed before last year and of considerable pressures that were mounted.

We offered a compromise between the total cutoff and the total restoration, which we favored. We believe that it is a very unfortunate decision. We had no choice except to request a change in a Congressional decision, which is unfortunate for Greece, unfortunate for Turkey, unfortunate for the possibilities of a settlement in Cyprus and unfortunate for the security of the Eastern Mediterranean.

I think it is a tragic evolution, and I hope that when this subject continues to be discussed, it will not be seen in terms of a conflict between the Executive and the legislative and not trying to prove who was right to begin with, but trying to see it in terms of the fundamental interests of the United States and the basic requirements of peace.

It is in that spirit that we will try to live with the decision, and we will try to do the best we can. We will have to come back to the Congress with our best judgment later on.

Q Mr. Secretary, Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen says a CIA spokesman told him the Soviets are pumping about $10 million a month into Portugal to finance a Communist takeover of that country.

Senator Bentsen says the State Department tells him there are unconfirmed reports of $2 million a month. Can you tell us what you know about how the Soviets are intervening in the internal affairs of Portugal? Is this intervention not a violation of the European security agreement, and if it is a violation, why are we signing the agreement?

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: First of all, with respect to the CIA estimates, we may have reached a point where the CIA estimates to nongovernmental personnel have a greater degree of precision than the CIA estimates which we received.

We have not been given that figure, but that is not the point. I have not seen any confirmed reports of any particular figure, $10 million, $2 million or any other figure.

What I have seen makes $10 million seem high, but that is not the issue which you are raising.

With respect to Portugal, it is important to remember a number of things.

First is that the original change in Portugal had nothing to do with the Communist Party of Portugal or with the Soviet Union. That resulted from the colonial war and the inefficiency and lack of popular base of the previous authoritarian Government.

Secondly, when the change occurred, the evolution it took also was largely due to internal Portuguese trends, including the fact that the dominant armed forces movement had been serving in African colonial wars for a long time and had not perhaps been in the mainstream of Western European liberal democratic thought.

Thirdly, in assessing what outside powers did, it is important to assess not only what one side did do, but what the Western countries, for a variety of reasons, did not do.

In making a fair assessment of the evolution in Portugal, both of these factors have to be taken into account.

Fourthly, to the extent that the Soviet Union is active in Portugal, we consider it incompatible with the spirit of relaxation of tensions, and we will bring it to the attention of the Soviet leaders when we meet with them, as we already have brought it to their attention.

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Q Mr. Secretary, to follow that question, what do they say?

Q What do they say when you bring it to their attention?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The question is, first of all, what is the degree of their intervention.

I will not go into the details of the diplomatic discussions. We have brought it to their attention. If there is any result from our approaches, the result is more likely to be reflected in actions, if there is any result, than in a long exchange because Governments are not in the habit of confirming this kind of activity.

I would like to stress, however, again, it is an easy way out for us to blame everything that goes against our interests on Soviet machinations. We have also to consider the failures of the West to do what it can do.

Q Mr. Secretary, can you say now or give any indication how close you believe Egypt and Israel are to reaching a new agreement and whether you believe another shuttle will be required?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Egypt and Israel, in my view, are now both making serious efforts. These efforts still have left considerable gaps between the two positions. Nevertheless, if the two sides can survive each other's public statements -- which is not yet self-evident to me -- I believe that they are beginning now to talk about the same range of issues in a negotiable manner.

Whether there will in fact be an agreement is premature to say. If we should get close to an agreement and if the success is probable, then I would think that a shuttle will be necessary to work out the language and the final details.

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We are not yet at the point where we can make that decision, but basically there has been a serious effort by both sides, which has led to a narrowing of the differences, which in several key areas, however, are still quite wide.

Q Can I follow that up, Mr. Secretary? Are you prepared at this point to offer any suggestion of your own in order to bridge the gap between the two sides?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: In the mediating process in which we are engaged we obviously, when we receive ideas from either side, occasionally indicate what in our view the traffic will bear and occasionally make suggestion of the direction in which we believe progress can be made.

We have not thought, up to now, that the difference between the two sides was sufficiently narrow for us to put forward an integrated American plan, and we still do not think we have reached that point and, moreover, it is not necessary, as long as there is not any total deadlock, and we don't believe there is a deadlock now.

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Q Mr. Secretary, there have been reports that the CIA plotted to overthrow the Allende regime in Chile. In one instance, the plot included the kidnapping of a ranking military officer of that country. Is this indeed the case, and were you aware of it, and did you do anything about it?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I do not believe that any purpose is served by discussing fragmentary reports that leak out of this or that office. All the documents on all the covert activities that have ever been planned or carried out in Chile have been submitted to the Church Committee.

The Church Committee, therefore, will be able to make a report based on all the documents in everybody's file, and it will be able to distinguish between things that may have been talked about and things that were actually done in a way that the press does not always do, in reporting about it.

Q Mr. Secretary, I am just interested in your answer to Murray Marder a while ago on this criticism where you said one of the things we have to do is keep in perspective the nature and depth of the criticism.

What does that mean? Does that mean the criticism is invalid in some ways?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, it does not mean that even remotely. The criticism is put forward by serious people with serious concerns, but I believe also that it does not necessarily reflect the majority of the American people.

It is inevitable that when you conduct a poll across as wide a range of issues as are involved in moving towards a less tense relation with the East European countries and the Soviet Union, that there are many aspects of it that will be objected to by this or that group.

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Our point is that one has to look at the evolution; and secondly, one has to look at the alternative, and one has to ask oneself what the alternative policy is that is being proposed.

We respect the views of the critics. We take them seriously, but we have to assess that criticism on its merits and we have to assess also its threats.

Q Would you answer a question on CSCE vis-a-vis the matter of human rights, which there has been skepticism raised about?

How far are the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries willing to go on the matter of respecting the human rights embodied in the CSCE document, and how optimistic are you that the Soviet Government and the Eastern European block will liberalize to that extent?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: On the so-called Basket 3 which contains the human rights provisions, the outcome of the conference was substantially a Soviet acceptance of a joint Western proposal that was made as a final agreed position in early May. So if all of these provisions are carried out, we believe it would be a substantial step forward.

At the same time, of course, we cannot assert that this document is without legal force with respect to us, but is of legal force with respect to the other side. Therefore, a great deal depends on the general atmosphere that exists in the world on whether these guidelines and principles will in fact be implemented.

What the so-called Basket 3 does is to enable the West and the United States to appeal to agreed documents as a guide for conduct, and this is what we will do. And we will also hope to bring about a further improvement of East-West relations that would accelerate the process and improve the atmosphere. It is not absolutely binding, but it is a step forward, to have Communist agreement with these principles, and we will do our utmost to hold them to it.

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Q Mr. Secretary, what reaction do you anticipate the Turkish Government will take in response to what Congress has done? Will they now cause us to have to give up, leave, or otherwise terminate some of our bases there?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I have learned one thing in recent months which is that if what you predict happens, you are blamed for having caused the result which you foresee by your prediction, and therefore, I am not going to make a prediction which we will then be accused of having encouraged the Turkish Government to take.

We believe that it was a very unfortunate and sad decision that was taken yesterday because it helped nobody, including those who passionately urged it. But we have made this case now.

We have been told by the Turkish Government on innumerable occasions that there would be some reaction. We are now engaged in talking to the Turkish Government -- I had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Demirel this morning. The President sent him a message yesterday -- in trying to urge restraint and moderation on the Turkish Government because the basic values that are involved in our joint defense and that affect issues far beyond Turkish-American relations, have not changed as a result of this vote.

So we are hoping that Turkey will not take any precipitous action and give everybody an opportunity to see whether progress can be made on the issues that have produced this in the first place, so I would not want to make a prediction. I do not know what the Turkish reaction to our appeals will be.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. EDT)

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